

To: Enck, Judith[Enck.Judith@epa.gov]
From: Fessler, Andrew
Sent: Thur 12/3/2015 3:54:34 PM
Subject: RE: Hoosick falls, ny drinking water

Nothing in today's Times Union

From: Enck, Judith
Sent: Thursday, December 03, 2015 10:21 AM
To: Fessler, Andrew <Fessler.Andrew@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Hoosick falls, ny drinking water

Nothing in today's Albany times Union ?

Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 3, 2015, at 10:50 AM, Fessler, Andrew <Fessler.Andrew@epa.gov> wrote:

Thanks John. In addition to the articles, I've attached the 2014 drinking water quality report from Village of Hoosick Falls

Andrew Fessler

EPA Region 2

Office of the Regional Administrator

Fessler.Andrew@epa.gov

(212) 637-4333

-----Original Message-----

From: Martin, John

Sent: Thursday, December 03, 2015 9:41 AM

To: Fessler, Andrew <Fessler.Andrew@epa.gov>
Cc: Mears, Mary <Mears.Mary@epa.gov>; McGowan, Michael
<McGowan.Michael@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: Hoosick falls, ny drinking water

Hi Andrew--

Here's what I've come up with. I believe it is complete, but feel free to supplement if you've found anything else.

John

Packed Public Meeting on PFOA in Hoosick...

CBS6 Albany

December 2, 2015

Link to video report: <http://www.cbs6albany.com/news/features/top-story/stories/packed-public-meeting-pfoa-hoosick-falls-31071.shtml>

HOOSICK FALLS -- It was standing-room only at a public meeting in Hoosick Falls on Wednesday night.

Village residents are concerned that their drinking water has high levels of a potentially cancer-causing chemical. Testing of the water, done over the last year, has shown high levels of PFOA in the municipal supply which serves around 5,000 people. PFOA is a chemical that was used in manufacturing non-stick coatings for pots and pans.

Residents have been receiving 5-free gallons a day of bottled water at the local Tops while the Village and the health department have been working on a plan to address the issue.

"It's inconvenient, but it's the safer way to go than drinking the water that's coming out of the faucet. I'm glad that they're doing this for the protection of our children and for us," said Hoosick Falls resident Laura Peabody.

Karen Kowalik also lives in the village and was picking up water before the meeting on Wednesday night.

"It's very concerning from every aspect...from drinking, to cooking, to showering...we just don't know the level of harms it's causing, a lot of unanswered questions," she said.

"The problem that we have is that this is a non-regulated contaminant, there are no requirements to test for this, we tested for it anyway," said Hoosick Falls Mayor David Borge. Now the village needs to deal with the results.

Testing showed particularly high levels of PFOA around the Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics site on McCaffrey Street.

"We did find that in some of the ground water samples there were high levels of PFOA. What we don't know is how those got into the ground water...There was materials that were processed at the site that did have low levels of PFOA in them," says Julia DiCorleta, a General Manager at the plant. Production of those materials stopped in 2003.

Saint-Gobain has been paying for the bottled water being provided to village residents it has also recently committed to covering the cost of upgrading the village's water treatment plant which will cost upwards of \$2 million. Work on the upgrades has already begun but it'll likely be at least a year before it is finished. In the meantime, the bottled water will continue to be provided. Many residents were asking whether bathing, brushing teeth and cleaning clothes in the water is safe, most of the health professionals said it likely is.

Health Officials Discuss Water Safety Concerns in Hoosick Falls WTEN News 10 Albany (ABC)

By: Rachel Yonkunas

December 2, 2015

Link to video report: <http://news10.com/2015/12/02/health-officials-discuss-water-safety-concerns-in-hoosick-falls/>

HOOSICK FALLS, N.Y. (NEWS10) – New York State and Rensselaer County Department of Health officials were in Hoosick Falls Wednesday night to answer questions on the unregulated contaminant PFOA.

PFOA has been detected in the village's public water supply, but people said they are getting mixed messages on what the contamination means for their health. People in the village said one side tells them they can still use water for daily use while the other side said to stop using tap water all together.

Dr. Marcus Martinez and his father are well known doctors in Hoosick Falls. The family has seen the declining health in the small village.

"There's probably always been a higher instance here, it would seem, of more aggressive cancers in younger people," he said. "You know, more than you typically see."

Dr. Martinez, himself, had cancer in September 2014. And now almost everyone at the meeting Wednesday night wants to know if people are sick from the contaminated water.

The New York State Department of Health detected high levels of PFOA in village wells. PFOA is an unregulated contaminant, though it has been linked to serious health problems.

“I have a couple of kids,” Martin Pearson said. “We raised kids here. So you wonder how long it’s been present.”

The chemical was once used in the process of making Teflon, a product that came out of a Hoosick Falls facility even before Saint-Gobain took residence in 1999.

“We haven’t used any materials at the site since 2003 that have PFOA in them,” Saint-Gobain General Manager Julia DiCorleto said.

The company, however, is funding a \$2 million water filtration system to get rid of the chemical and have provided bottled water in the meantime.

“We felt it was important to move forward with a solution knowing the GAC system could solve this problem,” DiCorleto said.

“It’s not like they’re not trying to do something,” Bea Peterson, of Hoosick Falls, said.

Still, people said they want to know just how much PFOA is coming out of their faucets.

“The real issue right now is the exposure on the day-to-day basis that people are having,” Dr. Martinez said. “And that needs to be addressed.”

The water filtration system is expected to be complete around October 2016. Saint-Gobain is providing free bottled water until its complete.

Hoosick Falls Community Tackles Water Contamination WTEN News 10 Albany (ABC)

By: Samantha DiMascio

December 2, 2015

Link to video report: <http://news10.com/2015/12/02/hoosick-falls-water-under-question/>

HOOSICK FALLS, N.Y. (NEWS10) — Imagine going to your faucet and filling a glass of water and having to think twice about drinking it? That's how some people here in are living.

It's been this way since last month, after water samples from a manufacturing company here in the village tested positive for high levels of a chemical called PFOA.

They say it's no way to live, so tonight the village is holding an open meeting here at the Immaculate Conception Church on Main Street from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

The state and county Departments of Health as well as other agencies are expected to be here.

In the meantime, people who live here can go to Tops supermarket and pick up bottled water at no cost to them.

PFOA is a potentially harmful chemical, the American Cancer Society says high levels of it are linked to a number of diseases. I'll tell you which ones, coming up.

Hoosick Falls Residents Discuss Water Supply with Officials TWC News

By: Tanja Rekhi

December 2, 2015

Link to video report: <http://www.twcnews.com/nys/capital-region/news/2015/12/2/hoosick-falls-residents-discuss-water-supply-with-officials.html>

People in Hoosick Falls gather to talk with officials about the recent finding of a potentially harmful chemical in the public water supply. As Tanja Rekhi reports, one question many wanted the answer to: How is the problem going to be fixed?

In the room, everyone is affected in some way or another by something that's hard to avoid: water.

"I take a shower with it," resident Gary Bessette said. "I eat. I boil noodles, if I make ramen noodles or whatever it is."

"Basically, I drank all that water for 20 some-odd years, probably 30 years I drank that water," resident Edward Andrick said.

Almost as unavoidable as water were the questions about what effect PFOA has had over the years. Six hundred parts per trillion of the potentially harmful chemical were found in the water supply in Hoosick Falls. Several tests have been conducted in wells and the groundwater at the Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics site.

"That value is right around the value that is the EPA health guidance value," said Lloyd

Wilson of NYSDOH, "so we don't expect any health effects in the community, but we don't like the PFOA being there."

In the meantime, Saint-Gobain is paying for residents to pick up five gallons of water a day from Tops Markets. They also are covering the millions of dollars it will take to install and operate a new filtration system.

"The technology used, the carbon filtration is a proven one," Wilson said. "And so it's just a matter of getting it right for this particular system, the exact flow, the exact water that's being used here."

But some neighbors hope it isn't too late.

"Hopefully it doesn't damage anything, you know?" Bessette said. "I'm definitely afraid of getting cancer, or anything happening like that."

Bottled Water Available for Hoosick Falls The Troy Record

By: Edward Damon

November 26, 2015

HOOSICK FALLS >> Residents concerned about drinking tap water after a chemical was found in the public water supply will soon be able to receive jugs of water at no cost. Funding from the Saint-Gobain Corp. will allow residents on the public water system to pick up free water at the Tops Friendly Market, according to Mayor David Borge. The water was made available Nov. 19, he said, with a limit of five gallons per day per household.

And a meeting next Wednesday aims to answer residents' questions about the presence of

perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA. The meeting will be held on Dec. 2 from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Immaculate Conception Church Hall, 67 Main St.

“It will be an informational session and will be opportunity for people to come in and have questions answered,” Borge said Tuesday.

Expected attendees include representatives from the village, town, state and county health departments, engineering firms, Saint-Gobain and Tops, as well as local realtors. Numerous residents have expressed a concern over PFOA in the water supply, a chemical that has been linked to certain cancers. A group called Healthy Hoosick Water, led by local physician Marcus Martinez, and a Facebook page, PFOA in Hoosick Falls, have both been created.

Residents who live on the public water system should check-in at the store’s service desk, where they will receive a coupon to use when checking out, Borge said.

Only 1 gallon and 2.5 gallon containers of select brands of water will be available at no cost, and there’s a limit of five gallons per day, per household.

Tops is located at 21495 New York Route 22 in Hoosick Falls and is open seven days a week.

It’s been just over a year since PFOA was first detected in the water supply, which serves some 4,900 individuals. The chemical was used in manufacturing non-stick coatings for cookware and waterproof, breathable membranes for clothing.

Since then, PFOA levels in groundwater at the Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics site on McCaffrey Street were found to be up to 45 times higher than what the federal government recommends.

It's still unclear of what was the source of the PFOA.

Saint-Gobain said it will pay to upgrade the village water treatment plant, reportedly at a cost of about \$2 million.

Borge said the village is in "very positive talks" with Saint-Gobain, but said he couldn't discuss further details.

Hoosick Falls Worried Chemical May be in Drinking Water WTEN News 10 Albany (ABC)

By: Rachel Yonkunas

November 25, 2015

Link to video report: <http://news10.com/2015/11/25/hoosick-falls-to-receive-free-water-amid-contamination-concerns/>

HOOSICK FALLS, N.Y. (NEWS10) – Free, bottled water will be provided to those that live in the village of Hoosick Falls over fear of possible contamination in the groundwater.

Gordon Metcalfe was never concerned with living behind the manufacturing plant Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics in Hoosick Falls until company representatives discovered wells surrounding the site had high levels of a chemical called PFOA.

"It's so close to here," he said. "I mean, it's only a few hundred yards away, and I didn't realize it was such high levels of contamination."

The possible contaminant isn't federally regulated, so it's hard to determine how dangerous it may be, but some studies have linked PFOA to thyroid disease, testicular cancer and kidney cancer. That's why many people like Metcalfe have switched to bottled water.

"For precautions and health reasons," Ralph Wyman of Hoosick Falls said. "It costs us money every month to go through 30 gallons of water."

To take away that burden, beginning on November 29, Tops Supermarket will supply homeowners with up to five gallons of water per day for free courtesy of Saint-Gobain.

"Save us some money," Wyman said.

Thanksgiving is one of the busiest cooking days of the year. Many people have lived in the village their entire lives meaning they have always used the tap water. Some homeowners said there's no reason to be alarmed but advised to stay vigilant.

"You still bathe with it. You still do dishes with it," Metcalfe said. "I mean, you have no choice. I'm assuming if it was really a health hazard, they would close the water system down completely."

The Hoosick Falls mayor said arrangements have been made for the water to be delivered at the senior center, St. Mary's Academy, and nursing homes for people who are not physically able to pick up water.

Bottled Water Available for Hoosick Falls, N.Y. Residents Starting Nov. 29 Bennington Banner

By: Edward Damon

November 24, 2015

HOOSICK FALLS, N.Y. — Residents concerned about drinking tap water after a chemical was found in the public water supply will soon be able to receive jugs of water at no cost.

Funding from the Saint-Gobain Corporation will allow residents on the public water system to pick up free jugs of water at the Tops Friendly Market, according to Mayor David Borge. The water will be available beginning on Sunday, Nov. 29, he said, with a limit of five gallons per day per household.

And an upcoming meeting scheduled for next Wednesday aims to answer residents' questions about the presence of perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA.

The meeting will be held on Dec. 2 from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Immaculate Conception Church Hall, 67 Main St.

"It will be an informational session and will be opportunity for people to come in and have questions answered," Borge said Tuesday.

Expected attendees include representatives from the village, town, state and county health departments, engineering firms, Saint-Gobain and Tops, as well as local realtors.

Numerous residents have expressed a concern over PFOA in the water supply, a chemical that has been linked to certain cancers. A group called Healthy Hoosick Water, led by local physician Marcus Martinez, and a Facebook page, PFOA in Hoosick Falls, have both been created.

Residents who live on the public water system should check-in at the store's service desk, where they will receive a coupon to use when checking out, Borge said.

Only 1 gallon and 2.5 gallon containers of select brands of water will be available at no cost, and there's a limit of five gallons per day, per household.

Tops is located at 21495 New York Route 22 in Hoosick Falls and is open seven days a week.

It's been just over a year since PFOA was first detected in the water supply, which serves some 4,900 individuals. The chemical was used in manufacturing non-stick coatings for cookware and waterproof, breathable membranes for clothing.

Since then, PFOA levels in groundwater at the Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics site on McCaffrey Street were found to be up to 45 times higher than what the federal government recommends.

It's still unclear of what was the source of the PFOA.

Saint-Gobain said it will pay to upgrade the village water treatment plant, reportedly at a cost of about \$2 million.

Borge said the village is in "very positive talks" with Saint-Gobain, but said he couldn't discuss further details.

Hoosick Falls, Saint-Gobain Still in Talks Over Distributing Bottled Water The Troy Record

By: Edward Damon

November 23, 2015

HOOSICK FALLS >> The village and a company that owns a local manufacturing facility are still in talks about distributing bottled water to the public, in light of a contaminant being discovered in the public water supply.

Mayor David Borge confirmed that he and village officials are talking to Saint-Gobain Corporation, owner of Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics, about offering bottled water. Borge was not sure when the bottles would be made available.

“There are still some logistics we need to work out,” Borge said.

Borge also said that the public water still meets all county, state and federal standards, despite it containing perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is in an “information gathering phase” about the chemical, he said, which has been linked to certain types of cancers.

The bottled water, Borge said, will be offered as an option for people who aren’t comfortable drinking the tap water.

The village is now in talks with the company about that as well, Borge said, but he declined to give details.

It’s been just over a year since PFOA was first detected in the water supply, which serves some 4,900 individuals. The chemical was used in manufacturing non-stick coatings for cookware and waterproof, breathable membranes for clothing.

Since then, PFOA levels in groundwater at the McCaffrey Street site were found to be up to 45 times higher than what the federal government recommends.

This month, Saint-Gobain representatives said the company will pay for a granular activated carbon filtration system. The system, which would remove the PFOA to undetectable levels, would reportedly cost about \$2 million.

“While it is correct that PFOA has been found in the local water supply in Hoosick Falls, and it is correct that Saint Gobain found PFOA in groundwater in some samples taken during our groundwater testing at the McCaffrey Street facility, we do not know that our facility is the source of the PFOA in the local water supply,” Saint-Gobain Spokeswoman Dina Silver Pokedoff wrote in an email on Wednesday. She continued, “Nonetheless, we are taking action to address the situation, and we are working to make bottled water available to residents of Hoosick Falls who want it as soon as possible. The details of that process are being worked out with the mayor’s office, and we would expect that as soon as the details are finalized, the mayor will inform the village.”

“Saint Gobain is committed to doing the right thing for the village of Hoosick Falls,” Silver Pokedoff said.

Saint-Gobain to Upgrade Hoosick Falls Treatment Plant to Remove Contaminant
Bennington Banner

By: Edward Damon

November 17, 2015

HOOSICK FALLS, N.Y. — A corporation that owns a local manufacturing facility says it will pay to upgrade the village's water treatment plant, a move that aims to remove a contaminant found in the public water supply last year.

The Saint-Gobain Corporation has agreed to fund a filtration system that would remove perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA, according to Mayor David Borge. In the meantime, the company is considering building a temporary system and could soon offer bottled water to the public.

The French company is the owner of the Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics at 14 McCaffrey St., which makes tapes and foams, and employs about 190 people.

It's been just over a year since PFOA, a carcinogen believed to cause some types of cancers, was first discovered in the village water supply. It's used in manufacturing non-stick coatings for cookware and waterproof, breathable membranes for clothing.

Since then, PFOA levels in groundwater at the Saint-Gobain site were found to be up to 45 times higher than what the federal government recommends.

Borge said the village water system is in full compliance at the county, state and federal level.

"In fact, we exceed most of them," he said in an interview on Tuesday.

Water will continue to flow from the public water system. Saint-Gobain will soon make bottled water available to those who would prefer it over tap water, he said.

It was not clear when bottled water would be made available and efforts to reach a Saint-Gobain spokesperson on Tuesday were unsuccessful.

The upgrades to the water treatment plant were previously reported to cost about \$2 million.

Residents have called for more transparency from both the village and Saint-Gobain, and expressed concerns over the contaminant. Possible health effects of PFOA that are often cited include kidney and testicular cancer, and thyroid disease.

A group called Healthy Hoosick Water, led by physician Marcus Martinez, was established. Also created was a Facebook page, PFOA in Hoosick Falls.

"There has to be a legally, enforceable agreement among all of the stakeholders," attorney David Engel of Albany's Nolan & Heller, LLP, representing Healthy Hoosick Water, told the Banner on Tuesday. "We're going to continue with our efforts until we arrive at a legally sufficient and comprehensive resolution."

PFOA is not one of the 90 contaminants regulated under the Safe Water Drinking Act, the main federal law meant to ensure drinking water quality.

It's categorized as an "emerging contaminant" by the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), "a chemical or material that is characterized by a perceived, potential, or real threat to human health or the environment or by a lack of published health standards."

It's also one of 100 chemicals and 12 microbes on the EPA's Contaminant Candidate List that are known to be in public water supplies but are not regulated.

In 2009, the EPA established a "provisional health advisory" that limits the amount of PFOA in drinking water to 400 parts per trillion.

Samples taken last October, requested by the village, were found to have PFOA levels between 170 and 540 parts per trillion. In response, a well that had served as the prime water supply was replaced with another.

Additional samples taken from the public water supply in June were found to have PFOA levels as high as 662 ppt.

Saint-Gobain voluntarily informed the EPA of the contaminant's presence through a letter that was hand-delivered to the EPA's Washington, D.C. headquarters in December of 2014,

An attorney representing the company wrote that the Hoosick Falls facility processes things that were made with PFOA, "but it is not and never has been a manufacturer, processor, distributor or user of PFOA per se anywhere in the United States" and had participated in a voluntary industry phase-out effort by purchasing raw materials with decreasing levels of PFOA as an ingredient.

Recent tests done at five wells dug at the Saint-Gobain property showed PFOA levels between 570 ppt and 18,000 ppt. The latter level is 45 times higher than the EPA's advisory level of 400 ppt.

Dina Silver Pokedoff, a spokeswoman based in Saint-Gobain's headquarters in Malvern, Pa., confirmed recently that the company is in talks with the village "about appropriate water treatment options, including the activated carbon water treatment system that village officials have identified as their preferred solution for this issue."

"As members of this community, we have been and remain committed to coordinating with Village officials to find a solution to this problem," she wrote in an email last week. "We live and work here and we will work with the community to find a solution to this issue."

The contaminant has not been found in the Hoosick Falls Central School District water supply. That system, drawing from two wells on the school's campus, serves some 1,600 individuals, according to the state, and is independent from any municipal system. Water testing done earlier this year found negligible PFOA levels of fewer than 2.24 ppt, according to a message on the district's website.

Borge said representatives from Saint-Gobain, including Business Manager Philip Guy from the local plant, gave a very positive presentation on Nov. 10.

Borge acknowledged that the EPA is in a data gathering phase to determine whether to create a standard for how much PFOA is allowed in a water supply.

"We won't have to wait [for a standard to be created]," Borge said. "We will go forward with the filtration system that we know for a fact will work."

Hoosick Falls Worried Chemical May be in Drinking Water WTEN News 10 Albany (ABC)

By: Rachel Yonkunas

November 10, 2015

Link to video report: <http://news10.com/2015/11/10/hoosick-falls-worried-chemical-may-be-in-drinking-water/>

People packed a village meeting in Hoosick Falls Tuesday night after receiving a notice their water might be contaminated.

Manufacturing plant Saint Gobain announced on Tuesday that water samples near its site tested positive for a chemical called PFOA. It is unknown how widespread the contamination is, but people living in the village are worried their well water is also contaminated.

"It's very concerning," Kevin Allard said.

Allard doesn't want tap water to become a luxury, but he isn't sure if his well water is completely safe.

While PFOA isn't regulated, some studies have linked it to serious health concerns.

“If that plume goes outside the village limits, I mean how far is that?” Allard wondered.

The American Cancer Society reports that too much exposure to PFOA is linked to thyroid disease, testicular cancer and other serious health risks.

“There’s a fairly robust body of literature out here that addresses various health effects,” attorney David Engel said.

But other agencies said more research and evidence is needed.

“We’re caught in a Catch 22, if you will, because this is a non-regulated contaminant,” Hoosick Falls Mayor David Borge said. “There are no rules.”

Due to the findings, Saint Gobain said they will pay an estimated \$2 million for a water filtration system in the village and provide bottled water to people who are worried about contamination.

Allard said it’s a great first step, but it shouldn’t be the only step.

“Full disclosure builds trust with the community,” he said. “And that’s what we need right now is trust.”

Bottled water will be handed out soon and more testing is set to take place.

Village Receives Response from NYDOH Regarding Water Contamination The Eagle
Newspaper January 29, 2015

HOOSICK FALLS – The Village of Hoosick Falls released the following information about the village water system:

The Village has requested guidance from the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) in analyzing our water contamination and its potential impact on public health. We received their response via the Rensselaer County Department of Health on January 12, 2015. It states:

The presence of perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) at the levels detected in the supply wells and in finished water does not constitute an immediate health hazard. Based on specific toxicity information for PFOA, the estimated exposure to PFOA in the water at the highest level detected (0.54µg/L) is at least 50,000 times lower than PFOA exposures that are known to cause health effects in animals. The detection of PFOA indicates a need to identify the sources of contamination and to take measures to reduce it so that long-term exposure can be reduced and future exposures prevented.

Samples taken from the water supply wells on October 2 and November 4, 2014 were found to contain PFOA at levels ranging from 0.17 micrograms per liter (µg/L) to 0.54 µg/L. One sample of finished (treated) water taken on November 4th contained PFOA at 0.44 µg/L. These levels are below the New York State unspecified organic contaminant public drinking water standard of 50 µg/L, which applies to certain types of organic chemicals such as PFOA, which do not have a standard based on their toxicity.

Information on the health effects of PFOA in humans is limited. There is evidence from studies in people that elevated levels of PFOA in serum can lead to reduced fetal growth. There is also some evidence from studies in humans that increased serum PFOA levels may increase the risk for testicular and kidney cancer, but collectively the studies are not strong enough to draw a definitive conclusion about whether PFOA causes cancer in humans. In laboratory animals, exposure to high levels of PFOA caused weight loss, increased liver weights, developmental delays, reduced red blood cells, and reduced fetal growth. PFOA caused cancer in laboratory animals that were fed large amounts for their lifetimes. Chemicals that cause adverse health effects in animals after high levels of exposure may pose a risk to humans exposed to lower levels over long periods of time.

PFOA is a manufactured chemical that is used to make other chemicals called fluoropolymers. Fluoropolymers are substances that have special properties such as fire resistance and the ability to repel oil, grease and water. Thus, they have many manufacturing and industrial applications. PFOA is used to make non-stick surfaces on cookware and in fire-fighting foams, cosmetics, greases, lubricants, paints, polishes, and adhesives. PFOA can get into drinking water through releases from fluoropolymer manufacturing or processing facilities, wastewater treatment plants, and landfills.

Hoosick Falls Residents Raise Concerns After Low Levels of Carcinogen Found in Water Supply The Troy Record

By: Danielle Sanzone

January 24, 2015

HOOSICK FALLS >> Low levels of a carcinogen believed to cause some types of cancers were detected in the water supply for the village of Hoosick Falls. While a state Department of Health study found that the amount found in the water is 50,000 times lower than exposures that are known to cause health effects, many residents are not taking that chance.

About 3,400 village residents utilize the municipal water system, along with 120 properties outside the village with access to the water, said Hoosick Falls Mayor David Borge.

The first samples of drinking water were sent to the state DOH in October, with results available later that month. The initial study found traces of perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) at levels between 180 parts per trillion and 540 parts per trillion (ppt).

“What complicates this is this is a non-regulated element. There are no county, state or federal regulations,” said Borge, who said that the village has done “an awful lot of research” on the topic to determine the health risks and a plan of action.

The possible health effects of PFOA are still not confirmed but, as a result of a class-action lawsuit and community settlement with American chemical company DuPont, previous studies concluded that there was probably an association between PFOA exposure on some level and health outcomes including kidney cancer, testicular cancer, ulcerative colitis, thyroid disease, hypercholesterolemia, and pregnancy-induced hypertension, according to online encyclopedia Wikipedia, which also stated that PFOAs persist indefinitely in the environment.

“Mark”, a resident in the village who did not want to use his name, said he was talking with neighbors last spring and they started to notice a lot of deaths that they later found were similar to the diseases found in the DuPont case.

“My dad passed away of kidney cancer,” he said. “I approached one local doctor to help with the research on this. He has also since been diagnosed with another cancer.”

While he reiterated that there are no state or federal regulations on PFOAs, he noted that New Jersey’s regulated level is 0.040 and the amount discovered locally is up to 0.540.

“Our wells are only 150 yards from the water treatment plant,” said “Jimmy”, another resident who wished to not be named. “If it’s something that ‘probably’ causes cancer, I don’t want my family drinking it.”

“Jimmy” said he has been vocal at meetings about possible negative side effects. His child goes to a private school in Hoosick Falls and he sends his student to school with bottled water daily.

A Facebook community page called “PFOA’s in Hoosick Falls” was created in recent weeks to provide residents with more information about the potential cancer agent.

“The bigger concern is that many people aren’t on Facebook, online, or at local meetings to find out about this,” he said. “I’d like to see more public awareness and people err more on the side of caution.”

Borge said the village is doing everything it can to mitigate the issue but emphasized that the PFOA levels from the studies have been going down. He said one possibility is using carbon filters at the plant to continue to minimize the levels.

“We are being very proactive, transparent, and recognize the emotional aspect here. We are going after how to fix this unregulated contaminant,” said Borge. “There is no one-size-fits-all solution here. We realize this is an issue, but if it was an immediate threat to public health the Department of Health would close us down immediately. And that hasn’t happened.”

Information on the health effects of PFOA in humans is limited, according to the state DOH.

PFOA is a manufactured chemical that is used to make other chemicals called fluoropolymers. Fluoropolymers are substances that have special properties such as fire resistance and the ability to repel oil, grease and water. Thus, they have many manufacturing and industrial applications. PFOA is used to make non-stick surfaces on cookware and in fire-fighting foams, cosmetics, greases, lubricants, paints, polishes, and adhesives. PFOA can get into drinking water through releases from fluoropolymer manufacturing or processing facilities, wastewater treatment plants, and landfills, the DOH letter to the village stated.

Borge said they are not concentrating on the source of the issue and instead they are concentrating on fixing it.

The exact source is not confirmed.

Saint Gobain and Oak-Mitsui are two companies along the Hoosic River in the community. Saint Gobain, in Hoosick Falls, makes tapes and foams, according to spokeswoman Dina Pokedoff. Saint-Gobain has been at two facilities in Hoosick Falls –Liberty Street and McCaffrey Street - since 1999. Both facilities were originally built in the mid-1950s and

early 1960s, respectively, and have had four prior owners. A total of 186 people are employed at the sites.

“As a member of the community, and a company committed to upholding standards, committed to the safety of our employees, and minimizing our impact on the environment, we share the community’s concerns and will cooperate with the Village of Hoosick Falls, the State of New York, and other authorities as appropriate,” stated Pokedoff, adding that Saint Gobain has not had any issues with PFOAs at other locations.

Oak-Mitsui was unable to be reached for comment.

“Jane”, a village resident for nearly 40 years, said her family members have worked at Oak-Mitsui for years. From her family members’ stories, she is also a firm believer in not drinking the village water.

“The water is funky,” she said succinctly. “It smells weird and we don’t drink it. For as long as I can remember, we’ve been told to not swim in the water and not drink the water. It’s not new but people are just learning about what’s in the water now. I don’t think it’s a safe thing.”

Borge said, “We’re working with the local industries, engineers, and experts in the field so we can find a way that people will be comfortable with drinking the water. I drink it. My family drinks it.”

Hoosick Falls Village Board Swears in New Member, Discusses Water Bennington Banner

By: Derek Carson

January 14, 2015

HOOSICK FALLS, N.Y. >> At their meeting on Tuesday, the Hoosick Falls Village Board swore in their newest member, and discussed the steps the village was taking to deal with a contaminant in the water supply.

Village clerk Anne Marie Bournt administered the oath to Karen Sprague, who the board announced in December would be serving out the term of Jeremy Driscoll.

During the public comments portion of the meeting, two concerned citizens spoke out against the presence of perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), which had been detected in the town's supply wells and in post-treatment water, asking the board to take a zero tolerance policy towards contamination of that kind. According to the New York State Department of Health, PFOA is "a manufactured chemical that is used to make other chemicals called fluoropolymers. Fluoropolymers are substances that have special properties such as fire resistance and the ability to repel water. Thus, they have many manufacturing and industrial applications. PFOA can get into drinking water through releases from fluoropolymer manufacturing or processing facilities, wastewater treatment plants, and landfills.

"While the board of health determined that levels of PFOA in the village's water (between .17 and .54 micrograms per liter), are roughly 50,000 times lower than the levels that have been shown to cause health problems in animals, the village trustees were determined to remove the contaminant from the water supply. "We realize that we have an unregulated contaminant in our water," said mayor David Borge, "It's not something that's acceptable, but it's there. We are looking at this and taking it very seriously."

Borge said that the village was reaching out to numerous county and state organizations to get advice on how to deal with the problem, as well as seek funding. Borge stressed that there was no quick or inexpensive solution.

"Information on the health effects of PFOA is limited," read a letter from the Rensselaer County Department of Public Health, which was handed out at the meeting, "There is evidence from studies in people that elevated levels of PFOA in serum can lead to reduced fetal growth. There is also some evidence from studies in humans that increased serum PFOA levels may increase the risk for testicular and kidney cancer, but collectively the studies are not strong enough to draw a definitive conclusion about whether PFOA causes cancer in humans. In laboratory animals, exposure to high levels of PFOA caused weight loss, increased liver weights, developmental delays, reduced red blood cells, and reduced

fetal growth. PFOA caused cancer in laboratory animals that were fed large amounts over their lifetimes. Chemicals that cause adverse health effects in animals after high levels of exposure may pose a risk to humans exposed to lower levels over long periods of time."

Borge said the priority is to remove the contaminant. "Once we mitigate, then we have to find out where it's coming from," he said, "not the other way around."

Village Water Hot Topic at Board Meeting The Eagle Newspaper December 18, 2014

Water Quality Update

There was a great deal of discussion concerning the quality of drinking water in the village. At the request of a village resident, testing has been done to determine to what extent perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) resides in the village water.

Mayor Borge stated in a letter that is going out with water bills this week that the results are "mixed but encouraging" in that PFOA was only found in 1 of the 3 wells tested. Well 3 has replaced Well 7 as the primary water supply. They are trying to determine how the substance got into the water and are working with others in the field to determine how to remove it.

The Mayor assures the public that the "Village municipal water system continues to meet and exceed all County, State, and Federal standards for public health safety." They are taking necessary steps to assess the situation and determine how to rectify any issues there may be. Water samples have been taken and sent off to obtain baseline data; 2nd samples, including a post-treatment samples have also been taken.

The Village is following all regulations and oversight provided by the governing authorities and will continue to provide safe drinking water and keep the community informed.

As stated above, a letter explaining what has been done so far and next steps will be included in water bills that will go out next week.

John Martin

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-----Original Message-----

From: Enck, Judith

Sent: Wednesday, December 02, 2015 8:50 PM

To: Fessler, Andrew; Mears, Mary; McGowan, Michael; Martin, John

Cc: Evangelista, Pat; Simon, Paul

Subject: Hoosick falls, ny drinking water

Pad. On Thursday morning please do a media search on Pfoa drinking water issue in hoosick falls. Particularly Albany times Union and Troy record and Bennington banner. Andrew, please do a google search and compile articles on this topic over the past 18 months and send the articles to me, john Martin , Mary Mears , pat EVANGELISTA , Doug PABST , Joan MATTHEWS, paul Simon. Thanks

Sent from my iPhone

<HoosickFallsWaterQualityReport2014.pdf>